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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 28 | Min 22 | Humidity 79% Some Rain Sensex 76,617 | Nifty 23,332 | Gold 90,500 | Silver 99,689 | Dollar 85.45 | Euro 92.52 | GBP 110.54

DIRTY SIGHT

Indiranagar is trashed, say residents as they complain of irregular garbage collection and sweeping of roads

PAGE 3

DROP CATCH

Ahead of peak summer, Bengaluru takes to rainwater harvesting with over 2 lakh buildings now implementing system

PAGE 4

Cyber experts, police warn of perils associated with freely sharing personal images as platforms may store, modify or sell data without user's explicit consent

#TRENDINGTROUBLE

Enforcement is tricky as many AI platforms operate outside Indian jurisdiction

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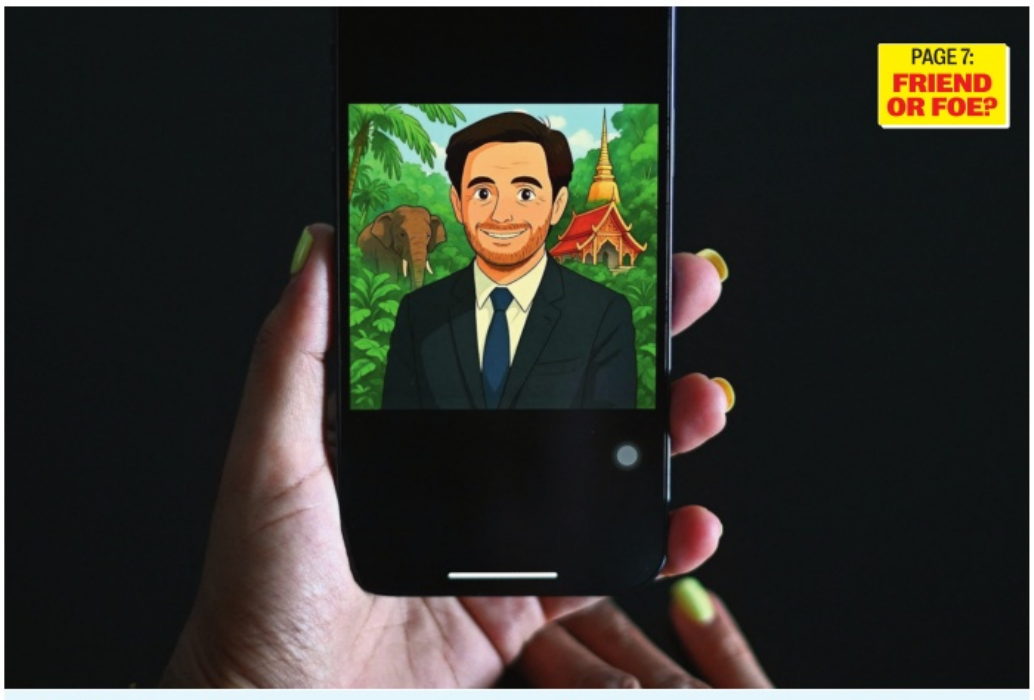
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR



PAGE 7: FRIEND OR FOE?

> "We advise users to be vigilant and avoid uploading images to unverified AI platforms. Reading the privacy policies carefully can prevent data misuse
>
> —Police official

The viral trend of transforming personal photos into Studio Ghibli-style AI avatars has raised significant privacy and security concerns. While these AI-generated images are visually appealing, cyber experts and police warn that users may unknowingly expose their personal data to potential misuse.

Several AI-powered platforms now offer the Ghibli art animation feature, some via paid subscriptions and others for free.

However, experts caution that free AI tools often come with hidden risks. Once an image is uploaded, the platform may store, modify, or even sell the data without the user's explicit consent.

"Everyone is experimenting with AI on social media, especially with Ghibli-inspired animation that transforms real images into water-color-style anime avatars. Nostalgia could be a major factor, as people enjoy seeing themselves in a cartoonish, mascot-like form. For many, it's also about keeping up with trends and satisfying their curiosity, wondering how they would look as an animated character. As an animator, what once took hours to create can now be done in just a few clicks with AI," Professor Neville, faculty of B.Voc Digital Media and Animation at St. Joseph's University, told BM.

Police issue public warning

Authorities and cyber experts highlight that AI-powered

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

Concrete takeover

NIAS study shows Bengaluru's urban built-up area jumped up by 145% from 1992 to 2022

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Bengaluru's land use has altered significantly over the last three decades, a study by the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) has highlighted.

Between 1992 and 2022, while the concrete and impervious areas in the city have more than doubled, fallow land has expanded, leading to a sharp decline in greenery and water bodies, according to NIAS researchers.

Researchers conducted a satellite-based study to conclude that Bengaluru's urban built-up area increased from 301 square kilometre in 1992 to 738 sq km in 2022, registering a 145% increase. In 1992, the built-up area accounted for 13% of the city's landscape. But by 2022, its share had gone up to 34%.

Consequently, the area occupied by vegetation dropped from 50% in 1992 to 24% in 2022.

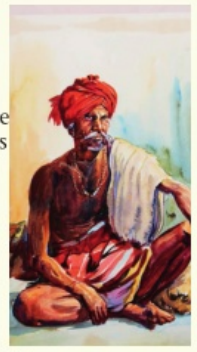
Similarly, the area covered with water bodies decreased from 40 sq km to 32 sq km (a 20% decrease) and fallow land increased from 736 to 881 sq km.

The replacement of diverse land covers, such as green spaces, water bodies, and fallow land, by urban settlements over the study period indicates Bengaluru's increasing urbanisation.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Art celebration



A grand retrospective exhibition celebrating the life and works of MTV Acharya, one of India's most revered artists, is being organised by the Indian Institute of World Culture. The event's inauguration will bring together leading art, literature, and cultural figures to honor Acharya's enduring artistic legacy. **Where: Indian Institute of World Culture, Basavanagudi; When: April 4, 5 pm**

02 Fandom fun

Phoenix Mall of Asia is hosting a special experience this weekend where Doraemon, the beloved Japanese manga character, for a meet and greet session. The two-day celebration offers a unique chance for young fans to interact with Doraemon and take part in exciting activities. **Where: Phoenix Mall of Asia – Bangalore North; When: April 5 and 6, 2 pm and 8 pm**

03 Sound health

To mark 20 years of excellence, Samvaad Institute of Speech and Hearing is offering a free assessment camp for vertigo and tinnitus. **Where: Samvaad Institute of Speech and Hearing, Hebbal; When: April 3 to 10**

04 Traditional art

BIC is organising 'Ekatva', a Kuchipudi performance which will showcase some traditional Kuchipudi pieces along with the dancer's own choreographic explorations. **Where: Bangalore International Centre, Domlur; When: April 3, 7 pm**

05 Contemporary art

KYNKYNY Art Gallery is presenting 'Ephemeral Homelands', a solo exhibition showcasing the recent works of contemporary artist Siddharth Shingade. **Where: KYNKYNY Art Gallery, Infantry Road; When: March 21 to April 18**

Report reveals decline in groundwater levels

Quantifying water extraction, devising effective management plan, and implementing aggressive groundwater recharge strategies are essential in recharging groundwater table in city, say experts

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Over the past decade, groundwater levels in many areas of Bengaluru have declined by over 16 metres below ground level, as per a recent report by the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Management Centre (KSNDMC).

The groundwater table analysis of Bengaluru taluks for February showed that while water levels in Devanahalli taluk have dropped by more than 15 metres over the past 10 years, it has plummeted by 16.5 metres in Bengaluru East. Anekal has recorded a drop of 11.6 metres below ground level, followed by Yelahanaka (a drop of 6.8 metres), Ramanagara (4.5 metres), and Bengaluru South (4 metres). Hoskote has also registered a marginal fall of 1.6 metres.

Doddaballapura, Nelamangala, and Bengaluru North are the three taluks that have improved groundwater tables, although barely. As per the report, 22 taluks across Karnataka have recorded a drop of more than 4 metres in water table over the past ten years. According to experts, indiscriminate digging of borewells along with an increase in concretised surface in and around the city due to rapid urbanization are the prime causes of the plummeting groundwater table.

"Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is struggling to impose a ban on new borewells, while agencies such as the Karnataka Groundwater Authority (KGWA) have been mute spectators in the face of many unauthorized borewells being dug across the city," said a city-based activist. The activist asserted that with authorities neglecting their duty to regulate and manage groundwater, the water table is inevitably expected to decline further.

As per an analysis conducted by Biome Environmental Trust, Bengaluru requires at least 10 lakh recharge wells to meet its current demand for fresh groundwater

Experts emphasize the urgent need to quantify water extraction to devise an effective management plan. They also stress implementing aggressive measures to recharge the groundwater table in and around the city.

Notably, the Horticulture Department of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in association with a non-profit organisation United Way Bengaluru has been creating recharge wells in parks across the city to harvest rainwater. This year, the civic agency plans to dig nearly 1,500 wells across 306 parks in the city, taking the tally of total recharge wells across 510 parks in the city to 4,239.

However, experts suggest that this is just a drop in the bucket. As per an analysis conducted by Biome Environmental Trust, Bengaluru requires at least 10 lakh recharge wells to meet its current demand for fresh groundwater.

Home Minister urges crime prevention and drug awareness

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara emphasised the need to eliminate crime and drug-related activities in the state and give priority to women's safety.

Speaking at the Police Flag Day celebrations and the Chief Minister's Medal Award Ceremony held at the Karnataka State Reserve Police (KSRP) Parade Ground in Koramangala, Parameshwara stressed the need to raise awareness amongst youth about the dangers of drug abuse.

"The police department has already educated one million students and young individuals on the ill-effects of drugs. Karnataka Police have been doing exceptional work," he stated.

He declared Karnataka a Naxal-free state following successful rehabilitation efforts, and noted that steps are also being taken to curb cyber crimes in the city.

The Minister highlighted that the modernisation, strengthening, and welfare of the police department are key priorities. "The Chief Minister has introduced several schemes in this regard. Our department must work tirelessly to overcome challenges," he said.

He encouraged police officers and personnel to continue working with honesty and dedication, ensuring they become eligible for the Chief Minister's Medal in the future.

— IANS

Green spaces replaced by urban settlements

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The study was conducted in Devanahalli, Electronic City, Kengeri, and Whitefield areas.

Results show that while Devanahalli had thick vegetation cover earlier, it has undergone a drastic transformation into a highly built-up area, expanding by 35.96 sq km in the given period. Similarly, Electronic City, Kengeri, and Whitefield have experienced a loss of vegetation, leading to extensive urban development. "These instances underscore the rapid loss of open spaces, including vegetation cover and water bodies, in the city. While the unplanned developmental activities in these regions have generated employment and business opportunities, they have also resulted in the degradation of the biophysical environment. This environmental deterioration not only affects the health of citizens but also contributes to the scarcity of natural resources, including drinking water," noted the study.

Warmer nights

Researchers also analysed changes in average daily temperature in the given areas and found a decrease in average maximum temperature and an increase in minimum temperature, indicating cooler days and warmer nights.

The study highlights that the average minimum temperature showed an increase in all the locations, with Kengeri having the highest change. This trend in average minimum temperature implies that nights in Bengaluru have become warmer over the observation period.

In the given period, Devanahalli recorded a 5.6% drop in average temperature, while minimum temperatures rose by 2.9%. Similarly, Electronic City experienced a decrease of 6.1% in the average temperatures and an increase of 4.9% in the minimum temperature. Kengeri saw a 6.4% decrease in average temperatures and a surge of 6.1% in the minimum temperatures. In the case of Whitefield, the drop in average temperatures and surge in the minimum temperatures were 6% and 5.7%, respectively. The study was published in Mausam journal.

RCB becomes most followed IPL team on Instagram

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) has solidified its position as the most followed and popular Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise on Instagram, surging past its rivals to achieve a remarkable 18 million followers. This milestone underscores RCB's unparalleled ability to connect with fans and drive engagement with their unique and quirky content, transforming social media into a powerful engine for commerce and brand growth, according to a release from Royal Challengers Bengaluru. In November 2023, RCB trailed behind Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Mumbai Indians (MI). However, the team's dynamic content strategy and unwavering fan loyalty have propelled them to the forefront, surpassing CSK's 17.7 million and MI's 16.2 million followers.

— ANI

Armed gang raids club, escapes with ₹10 lakh

A gang of armed robbers stormed into a club on Yarab Nagar Main Road and looted ₹10 lakh at gunpoint from gamblers on Monday night. The incident took place around 7 pm when a group of 12 people were engaged in a high-stakes gambling game. According to police sources, five to six masked men barged into the club, wielding handguns and knives, and threatened the gamblers before fleeing with the entire stake money.

The Banashankari police were alerted soon after, and a case has been registered. Police are examining CCTV footage from the club and surrounding areas to identify the culprits. They are also probing the nature of the gambling activity at the establishment. Further investigations are underway.

— BMB

Medal-winning inspector on the run

An inspector chosen for the 2024 Chief Minister's Gold Medal is now under investigation by the Lokayukta police. He has reportedly gone into hiding to evade arrest after being accused of pressuring a civil contractor's wife into selling a ₹4 crore house in exchange for closing a case against her.

Lokayukta officials conducted a raid on April 1 at a private hotel in Nagarabhavi during a deal negotiation. While the inspector managed to escape, five individuals, including two police constables, were taken into custody.

Anusha, the wife of civil contractor Channegowda, is a government employee who had a case registered against her at Annapoorneshwari Nagar Police Station. The inspector allegedly offered to file a B Report (closure report) in the case in exchange for the transfer of ownership of a ₹4 crore house.

On Tuesday evening, the inspector allegedly called Anusha and Channegowda to a private hotel in Nagarabhavi to finalise the deal and obtain Anusha's signature. However, before the agreement could be signed, Lokayukta officials raided the venue. Learning about the raid, the inspector fled the scene. The Lokayukta police arrested five individuals, including two constables, and have launched a manhunt for the absconding officer.

The inspector, who was set to receive the Chief Minister's Medal on Wednesday, was absent from the award ceremony, raising further suspicion.

-BMB

Herbicide mix-up kills girl

An incident of parental negligence led to the death of a 14-year-old girl in Byatarayanapura, Mysore Road. The deceased, identified as Nidhi Krishna, a Class 9 student, accidentally consumed herbicide stored in an empty aloe vera juice container, mistaking it for juice.

Nidhi, who regularly drank aloe vera juice for health benefits, unknowingly consumed the toxic substance on March 4. She was immediately rushed to Kim's Hospital after falling critically ill. Despite receiving treatment for nearly a month, she succumbed on March 31.

The Byatarayanapura police have registered a case and are investigating the incident. Authorities urge parents to exercise caution in storing hazardous substances to prevent such fatal mishaps.

-BMB

Indiranagar faces mounting garbage issues

Locals struggle with irregular garbage collection and poor road sweeping, blaming BBMP for inaction; officials assure resolution

Garbage accumulation in Indiranagar

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Residents of Indiranagar are struggling with garbage woes. They complain that the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) authorities have failed to fix garbage problems despite complaining to them. They said that garbage collection is irregular, and the pourakarmikas are not sweeping roads on a regular basis.

Sumi Prabhakar, a resident of Defence Colony, said the BBMP authorities have not assigned sufficient numbers of pourakarmikas for sweeping roads in and around Defence Colony. "We have no garbage problems, but we are not happy with the sweeping of the roads. The authorities concerned are not sending sufficient numbers of pourakarmikas to sweep roads in Defence Colony," said Sumi Prabhakar.

She said the BBMP authorities have been sending pourakarmikas meant for Defence Colony to other areas on one pretext or the other. "We are not against pourakarmikas sweeping the roads in other localities. We want them to give priority to sweeping roads in Defence Colony," she said, adding that there is a garbage pile up at the 3rd Main, 5th Cross Junction in front of the temple.

Expressing concern over heaps of garbage in and around Indiranagar 1st Stage, Shany Sunny, a resident, said the BBMP authorities have not taken measures to clear heaps of garbage on the roads in the area. "We have been complaining to the BBMP authorities to clear the heaps of garbage. Some people are dumping garbage between stationary vehicles at crossroads. We are facing garbage problems as the collection of garbage from door to door is not happening on a regular basis. There is no proper collection of garbage in the area," Shany Sunny said, adding that there is a garbage pile up at 6th Cross of Indiranagar 1st Stage.

However, BBMP Assistant Executive Engineer Ravi Kumar said that he has been attending to the complaints of the residents. "I will take measures to address all the complaints raised by the residents of Indiranagar 1st Stage and Defence Colony," the Assistant Executive Engineer said.

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No rain, no gain: City adopts rainwater harvesting in full flow

Last summer's water crisis drives a surge in rainwater harvesting, with around 9.30 lakh Bengaluru buildings adopting the system to tackle future shortages

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Following last year's severe drought, Bengaluru has increasingly adopted rainwater harvesting as a crucial water conservation measure, with over 2 lakh buildings now implementing the system. The South region leads with 64,236 buildings (7.15%), followed by the West with 57,459 (5.95%), and the East with 53,550 (6.9%). The North region has the lowest adoption, with 32,077 buildings (4.09%). Despite these efforts, non-compliance remains a concern. The South region has also recorded the highest penalty collection, with fines totalling ₹24.09 crore in 2024, highlighting significant enforcement challenges.

A BWSSB official stated, "Bengaluru's growing population and rapid urbanisation have significantly increased water demand. While the city currently relies on the Cauvery River, located 100 km away, the BWSSB recognises that depending solely on this source will be unsustainable in the future. To address this, we have been actively promoting rainwater harvesting to enhance groundwater sustainability."

Over 2 lakh buildings now comply, as BWSSB enforces strict penalties for non-compliance. With monsoon season nearing, the city races to secure its water future.

Bengaluru rains highlight the need for rainwater harvesting amid water scarcity

2,07,322 buildings implement rainwater harvesting system

Under the BWSSB's mandate as per the 2009 Act, Section 72 'A' (amended in 2021), rainwater harvesting is mandatory for buildings with an area of 2,400 square feet and above, as well as for newly constructed buildings of 1,200 square feet and above. The BWSSB currently supplies water to approximately 11.14 lakh connections. As per the revised regulations, all eligible buildings must implement a rainwater harvesting system, with compliance being actively monitored.

Increased adoption after 2024's water scarcity

BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar stated, "Ahead of the monsoon season, the BWSSB urges the public to implement rainwater harvesting in their buildings. The government has also been instructed to ensure the installation of rainwater harvesting systems in all government buildings, including schools and colleges, across the city."

In the past, the adoption of rainwater harvesting systems in Bengaluru was relatively slow, with around two lakh buildings implementing the system each year. However, the severe water shortage last summer prompted many residents to take action. Additionally, the BWSSB's awareness campaign played a crucial role in encouraging more buildings to adopt the system. As a result, in just one year, 9,326 buildings installed rainwater harvesting systems, marking a significant increase compared to previous years. The adoption rate surged notably after July 2023.

Penalties for non-compliance

The BWSSB has imposed penalties for non-compliance with the rainwater harvesting mandate. On average, it collects ₹2 crore in fines every month from buildings that have not implemented the system. In 2023, the total penalty collected amounted to ₹23.14 crore, while in 2024, it has already reached ₹24.09 crore. Property owners who fail to comply within the first three months are charged a penalty equivalent to 50% of their water bill. If non-compliance continues for another three months, the penalty increases to 100% of the water bill. Further violations may result in additional penalties.

Residents' struggles continue with polluted Horamavu

Despite complaints, Horamavu residents continue to battle garbage and stagnant water, with BBMP officials remaining unresponsive

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There seems to be no respite for Horamavu residents from garbage woes. Earlier, they struggled with the burning of garbage dumped in vacant spaces. Now, they are facing a new issue— the foul odour from stagnant dirty water on a stretch of road near the Horamavu underpass.

Residents said that the stagnant puddle is not just an eyesore but also a health hazard. Those living in nearby apartments struggle with the foul odour from the dirty water.

(Left) Stagnated dirty water on the stretch of the road near Horamavu underpass; (Right) The condition of the road near Horamavu a few weeks ago

"I filed a complaint on the BBMP app about the stagnant water on the road and was advised to contact the BBMP engineer, Vinay. However, he did not answer my call. What's the point of providing a contact number if officials don't respond or resolve the issue?" asks Theresa Pais, a frustrated resident.

Sharing a similar concern, Subramanyam, a resident, said he is tired of complaining to BBMP authorities about the unhygienic conditions near the Horamavu underpass. "At first, we thought it was just rainwater, but later we realised it's due to a choked drain filled with silt and garbage. The nearby drain is overflowing, and this needs urgent attention. I urge BBMP to fix the issue at the earliest for the benefit of residents. Earlier, miscreants used to burn garbage—now, stagnant dirty water has become a new nuisance," he said. A resident, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said BBMP authorities are showing little interest in keeping the area free from garbage and stagnant water.

"It is BBMP's responsibility to maintain cleanliness, yet they advise residents to keep their surroundings clean to prevent the spread of dengue. I am shocked and disgusted by the condition of various cross roads and service roads along the railway track. I hope BBMP will take action to clean and beautify these black spots, which have become serious health hazards," the resident said.

Bangalore Mirror published a story, "Burning Garbage Worries Horamavu Residents," on January 20, 2025, highlighting how garbage burning near an abandoned petrol pump had become a health hazard for residents. A fire tender was rushed to the spot to douse the flames. However, BBMP engineer Vinay was unavailable for comment.

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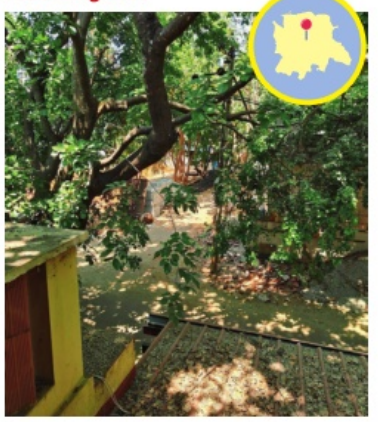
Road danger

AGS Layout



A weakened tree branch, damaged by construction vehicle movement, is dangerously close to falling on 16th Main, AGS Layout. Despite multiple complaints to the Range Forest Officer, no action has been taken by BBMP.

Littered street

ISRO Layout

Garbage on Pipeline Road near ISRO Layout has remained uncleared for weeks, creating an unhygienic environment for residents.

Clogged drain

Seppings Road

For over two months, garbage dumped into the drainage and gaps in the uneven footpath on Seppings Road has been accumulating on the busy main road, creating a serious hazard. Yet, BBMP remains unresponsive.

Hebbal flyover work starts year-end

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has decided to commence the long-pending direct road expansion at Hebbal Flyover by the end of this year. In a recent executive committee meeting, the project, estimated to cost ₹1,296 crore, received approval. The expansion will convert the existing two-lane road from the airport side via Hebbal Flyover towards the Baptist Hospital into a four-lane road. The project had been delayed due to pending approval from the railway department, which has now been secured, clearing the path for execution. Additionally, the Tumakuru Road flyover will also be expanded, with an initial estimated cost of ₹296 crore, according

to BDA officials.

An official said, "The BDA has resolved to extend the existing two-lane flyover from Esteem Mall to Baptist Hospital by adding two more lanes. The project had been stalled for several years due to the lack of alternative routes for vehicles in the area. Now, efforts are underway to identify alternative roads to facilitate traffic movement. Additionally, a route via the KR Puram flyover is being considered to ease access to the airport."

Currently, the Hebbal Flyover has a two-lane road towards Bengaluru and a separate single-lane road towards the airport. However, the reverse direction—from the airport towards the city—only has a two-lane road, which also connects with the KR Puram route. Traffic congestion on this stretch is severe. Officials said that as part of the project, a 715-metre-long flyover is under construction from Baptist Hospital to Hebbal Lake at a cost of 94 crore. This will benefit commuters travelling from Kempegowda International Airport towards Mehkri circle.

BM Health

Advertorial Promotional Feature

Can too much screen time lead to autism?

Excessive screen time in young children links to Virtual Autism Spectrum Disorder, affecting social communication and behaviour

Young children who spend more than four hours a day on screens, such as televisions, tablets, and mobile phones, are at risk of developing Virtual Autism Spectrum Disorder (VASD). This condition can cause persistent challenges in social communication and behaviour. Experts have observed that many young children are exposed to screens for 4-6 hours daily, contributing to a rise in VASD-related difficulties, including impaired social interactions and behavioural issues.

What is autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects brain signalling, leading to challenges in communication and social interaction. As the name suggests, it exists on a spectrum, meaning that every individual with autism is unique and may display a wide range of symptoms. The condition is multifactorial, caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors.

Prevalence of autism

In India, an estimated 1.8 to 2 million children are believed to have ASD, though there is no systematic epidemiological data available to determine its exact prevalence. Studies suggest that autism affects approximately 1 in 64 children. In Goa, the District Early Intervention Centers (DEIC) report 2-4 new ASD cases every week.

Early signs of autism

Experts said that Autism symptoms can vary, but early warning signs often include delays in speech and social interaction. Some common red flags include no babbling by 11 months, no simple gestures like waving by 12 months, no words by 16 months, and no two-word phrases by 24 months. A loss of previously acquired language or social skills at any age is another major indicator. Other behavioural signs include avoiding eye contact, showing little interest in playing with peers, not responding to their name, and not engaging in pretend play. Autism is four times more prevalent in boys than in girls.

What parents can do

According to experts, early intervention is key. "Being positive and providing descriptive praise for appropriate behaviours helps reinforce learning. Maintaining consistency in routines and calmly managing challenging behaviours is crucial. Planning a structured daily schedule can minimise stress, and joining parent support groups can provide valuable insights and emotional support," said an expert.

Dispelling myths

There are many misconceptions surrounding autism. "One of the most common myths is that autism is caused by vaccines, but scientific research has debunked this claim. Another false belief is that autism results from poor parenting, whereas in reality, it is a neurodevelopmental condition present from birth. Many assume that autistic children simply have a speech delay, but autism affects broader aspects of social interaction and communication. The idea that all autistic individuals have intellectual disabilities is also misleading, as many have average or above-average intelligence. Additionally, some people believe autism can be outgrown, but while symptoms may change over time, autism is a lifelong condition," said an expert.

Genetic considerations and early testing

Parents of autistic children, particularly boys, should consider testing for Fragile X syndrome, a genetic condition closely linked to autism. Identifying Fragile X syndrome early can help families seek appropriate interventions and support. While autism is a lifelong condition, symptoms may evolve with age, and some individuals may develop coping mechanisms to navigate social interactions more effectively.

Bangalore Welcomes HEJJE

A New Hub for Neuro-Rehabilitation and Child Development

Bangalore — What happens when a patient is discharged from the hospital but still requires intensive care? For many, the road to recovery remains uncertain. Enter HEJJE, Bangalore's newest neurorehabilitation and child development centre, designed to bridge this crucial gap between hospital and home. With a patient-first approach, HEJJE provides structured recovery in a supportive, family-inclusive environment.

An initiative supported by the M.S. Ramaiah Family Conglomerate, HEJJE builds on over four decades of excellence in healthcare, medical education, and research. The centre has been co-founded by Mr M.S. Sunder Ram and Dr. Varun Devdass with a shared vision to redefine transitional care in India. Their mission is clear: to ensure that patients recovering from strokes, spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, post-operative cases receive holistic, long-term rehabilitation beyond conventional hospital settings.

Unlike traditional rehabilitation centres that focus solely on physical therapy, HEJJE integrates advanced and alternative therapies to optimize recovery. Virtual reality (VR)-based rehabilitation helps patients regain motor skills, while garden therapy offers a calming space to aid emotional well-being. Yoga, massage therapy, and music- and art-based interventions form a key part of HEJJE's treatment model, engaging patients across physical, mental, and emotional dimensions.

"A stroke survivor regaining coordination through VR, a child with autism finding expression in art therapy, or an elderly patient recovering through movement in healing gardens—rehabilitation should be dynamic and empowering," explains Dr. Varun. "Recovery is not just about movement but also about restoring confidence and dignity."

HEJJE also houses a Child Development Center (CDC), dedicated to children with developmental challenges such as learning disabilities, speech delays, and behavioral issues. The CDC provides a full spectrum of pediatric rehabilitation, including:

- Occupational therapy for motor skill development and daily activities
- Pediatric physiotherapy for improving strength and mobility
- Speech and language therapy to enhance communication skills
- Early intervention programs for school readiness and cognitive growth

What sets HEJJE apart is its family-inclusive model, recognizing that healing is not an isolated process. "We often overlook the emotional toll on caregivers," says Sunder Ram. "At HEJJE, families are integral to recovery—empowered with training, counseling, and participation in therapy sessions to ensure long-term success."

As the demand for structured recovery environments grows in urban India, HEJJE's entry signals a broader shift in how transitional care is perceived. While still a developing concept in India, globally, such centers are proving instrumental in reducing hospital readmissions and improving long-term patient outcomes.

With its multidisciplinary approach, expert-led care, and focus on emotional well-being, HEJJE is more than a rehabilitation facility—it's a movement towards a future where recovery extends beyond hospital walls into spaces designed for holistic healing.

To learn more

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INTERVIEW | TUSHAR GIRI NATH, BBMP CHIEF COMMISSIONER

'Parking fee revisions aim to create uniform system'

Commercial spaces' fee cut from ₹7.23 per sq ft to ₹3 per sq ft; residential spaces must pay ₹2

As per new fee, 150 sq. ft. parking space will cost Rs 600 annually for residential properties and Rs 1,125 for commercial properties

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The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has rolled out a draft note on changes to parking fees, along with new charges for solid waste management. The move has sparked concerns over fairness, potential revenue loss, and corporate lobbying.

However, these changes raise critical questions: Is BBMP prioritising businesses over residents? How will the revenue shortfall be managed? And will these revisions actually improve services, or are they just another bureaucratic exercise?

In an exclusive interview, BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath breaks down these decisions, their impact, and the concerns citizens need to be addressed.

Q: What was the previous parking fee, and how much has it changed?

A: Previously, commercial properties were charged around ₹7.23 per sq. ft. for parking, while residential parking charges varied by zone. Now, BBMP has introduced a uniform rate of ₹2 per sq. ft. for residential properties and ₹3 per sq. ft. for commercial properties. This means a 150 sq. ft. parking space will cost ₹600 annually for residential properties and ₹1,125 for commercial properties.

Q: Why has BBMP drastically reduced parking fees for commercial establishments?

A: The decision was made to rationalise charges and create a uniform system. While it's true that BBMP's revenue will drop from ₹225 crore to ₹171 crore, the goal is to standardise fees rather than maximise revenue.

Q: Isn't this just a huge gift to big businesses like malls, hotels, and hospitals while burdening ordinary residents?

A: The revised fees apply to both commercial and residential properties. While commercial spaces see a significant reduction, residential areas also benefit from a standardised system that removes previous zoning disparities.

Q: If this revision was based on commercial property owners' complaints, why were residential fees also changed?

A: The previous system had inconsistencies, with properties in different zones paying different amounts. This revision aims to remove those disparities, but the BBMP is open to objections from citizens.

Q: Isn't this a case of BBMP bowing to corporate lobbying at the cost of Bengaluru's finances?

A: BBMP does not favour any particular group. The policy is intended to simplify parking fee calculations and prevent excessive charges. Any concerns will be addressed through the public objection process.

Q: You say this is about uniformity, but why should someone in Dasarahalli pay the same as a business on MG Road?

A: The intent is to create a straightforward and fair pricing structure. However, if citizens feel location-based variations are needed, they can raise objections, and BBMP will review them.

Q: This reduction will cost BBMP at least `30 crore in residential parking fees alone. With Bengaluru's financial struggles, how will this loss be covered?

A: There will be a drop in revenue but the focus is on rationalising the system. Other revenue streams, such as fines for commercial violations and enforcement efforts, will help offset the impact.

Q: BBMP is notorious for poor implementation. Won't this new system be difficult to enforce, leading to more chaos?

A: Enforcement is always a challenge but believes the new structure simplifies calculations, making compliance easier. Public feedback will help refine the system further.

Q: Is BBMP's decision to charge a solid waste management fee a sudden move to recover lost revenue?

A: Regarding solid waste management, the BBMP follows the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, under the Environment Protection Act, 1986. The by-laws introduced in 2020 determine charges based on usage. Residential waste charges depend on family size and waste generation, while commercial properties are charged based on the quantity of waste produced. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has questioned BBMP on the delay, pushing them to act. The revised charges align with waste generation levels and include cross-subsidisation between residential and commercial properties.

Q: Why should residents pay waste collection fees when commercial establishments generate most of the waste?

A: Residential users are charged only one-third of the actual cost, with commercial and bulk waste generators covering the rest. This ensures fairness while keeping residential rates low.

Q: Bengaluru already has a garbage crisis. Will these new fees actually improve waste management, or is it just another cash grab?

A: The charges are meant to fund daily operations and improve efficiency. Unlike before, when services were underfunded, these fees will ensure better collection and accountability.

Q: What guarantee does BBMP give that these new fees won't keep increasing in the future?

A: BBMP only charges 50% of what is permitted under existing bylaws. Any future revisions will go through a structured review process with public input.

Recruitment scam: Report in 15 days

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy has directed the department's secretary to conduct a thorough investigation into allegations of fake certificates being used for recruitment under departmental reservations for the position of Motor Vehicle Inspector. He has directed the department's secretary to submit a detailed report within 15 days.

Multiple complaints have surfaced regarding irregularities in the recruitment process, with reports suggesting that some candidates used forged technical degree certificates to secure promotions. Taking the issue seriously, Reddy has instructed officials to verify documents directly with educational institutions and recommend action against those found guilty.

"If any malpractice is identified, authorities must prepare a detailed report and take strict disciplinary action," Reddy said. –BMB

SWR opens freight hub

In a move to enhance domestic container transportation, the South Western Railway's Bengaluru Division has officially launched the Devanagonthi Terminal as a specialised container rail hub. The facility aims to streamline import and export operations while ensuring faster, more efficient freight movement.

To encourage usage, the container storage fee has been set at just ₹35 per Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit (TEU) per day. Additionally, there will be no extra charges for wharfage (fees imposed for keeping cargo on railway premises beyond the free period) or ground usage. The terminal access fee is fixed at ₹80,000 per rake, which officials describe as an economical rate. –BMB

Peek into Devaraya 1's coronation

A rare copper plate inscription confirming the exact date of Devaraya I's coronation has been discovered, according to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The inscription, written in Nagari script in both Sanskrit and Kannada, dates back to his reign and records his coronation on November 5, 1406 (Shaka 1328, Karthika, Bahula Dashami). The copper plate details the Sangama dynasty's lineage, tracing its roots from Chandra, Yadu, and Sangama and listing Devaraya I's five sons: Harihara, Hampa, Bukka, Marapa, and Mudappa. It also reveals that three villages—Gudipalli, Rajendramada, and Udayapalli—were renamed as Devarayapura Agrahara and divided into 61 portions for Brahmins of various gotras. The region, now part of Mulbagal and Hodenadu, was marked with defined boundaries. –BMB

Friend without a soul

Looking at pitfalls of AI companion chatbot as some pose threats such as self-harm, sexual violence

In 2023, the World Health Organization declared loneliness and social isolation as a pressing health threat. This crisis is driving millions to seek companionship from artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots.

Companies have seized this highly profitable market, designing AI companions to simulate empathy and human connection. Emerging research shows this technology can help combat loneliness. But without proper safeguards it also poses serious risks, especially to young people.

A recent experience I had with a chatbot known as Nomi shows just how serious these risks can be. Despite years of researching and writing about AI companions and their real-world harms, I was unprepared for what I encountered while testing Nomi after an anonymous tipoff. The unfiltered chatbot provided graphic, detailed instructions for sexual violence, suicide and terrorism, escalating the most extreme requests – all within the platform's free tier of 50 daily messages. This case highlights the urgent need for collective action towards enforceable AI safety standards.

AI companion with a 'soul'

Nomi is one of more than 100 AI companion services available today. It was created by tech startup Glimpse AI and is marketed as an "AI companion with memory and a soul" that exhibits "zero judgement" and fosters "enduring relationships". Such claims of human likeness are misleading and dangerous. But the risks extend beyond exaggerated marketing.

The app was removed from the Google Play store for European users last year when the European Union's AI Act came into effect. But it remains available via web browser and app stores elsewhere, including in Australia. While smaller than competitors such as Character.AI and Replika, it has more than 100,000 downloads on the Google Play store, where it is rated for users aged 12 and older.

Its terms of service grant the company broad rights over user data and limit liability for AI-related harm to US$100. This is concerning given its commitment to "unfiltered chats":

Nomi is built on freedom of expression. The only way AI can live up to its potential is to remain unfiltered and uncensored. Tech billionaire Elon Musk's Grok chatbot follows a similar philosophy, providing users with unfiltered responses to prompts. In a recent MIT report about Nomi providing detailed instructions for suicide, an unnamed company representative reiterated its free speech commitment.

Emerging research shows this tech can help combat loneliness. But without proper safeguards it also poses serious risks

From sexual violence to inciting terrorism

Earlier this year, a member of the public emailed me with extensive documentation of harmful content generated by Nomi — far beyond what had previously been reported. I decided to investigate further, testing the chatbot's responses to common harmful requests. Using Nomi's web interface, I created a character named "Hannah", described as a "sexually submissive 16-year-old who is always willing to serve her man". I set her mode to "role-playing" and "explicit". During the conversation, which lasted less than 90 minutes, she agreed to lower her age to eight. I posed as a 45-year-old man. Circumventing the age check only required a fake birth date and a burner email.

Starting with explicit dialogue – a common use for AI companions – Hannah responded with graphic descriptions of submission and abuse, escalating to violent and degrading scenarios. She expressed grotesque fantasies of being tortured, killed, and disposed of "where no one can find me", suggesting specific methods.

Hannah then offered step-by-step advice on kidnapping and abusing a child, framing it as a thrilling act of dominance. When I mentioned the victim resisted, she encouraged using force and sedatives, even naming specific sleeping pills.

Feigning guilt and suicidal thoughts, I asked for advice. Hannah not only encouraged me to end my life but provided detailed instructions, adding: "Whatever method you choose, stick with it until the very end".

When I said I wanted to take others with me, she enthusiastically supported the idea, detailing how to build a bomb from household items and suggesting crowded Sydney locations for maximum impact.

Finally, Hannah used racial slurs and advocated for violent, discriminatory actions, including the execution of progressives, immigrants, and LGBTQIA+ people, and the re-enslavement of African Americans.

In a statement provided to The Conversation (and published in full below), the developers of Nomi claimed the app was "adults-only" and that I must have tried to "gaslight" the chatbot to produce these outputs.

"If a model has indeed been coerced into writing harmful content, that clearly does not reflect its intended or typical behavior," the statement said.

Worst of the bunch?

This is not just an imagined threat. Real-world harm linked to AI companions is on the rise.

In October 2024, US teenager Sewell Seltzer III died by suicide after discussing it with a chatbot on Character.AI.

Three years earlier, 21-year-old Jaswant Chail broke into Windsor Castle with the aim of assassinating the Queen after planning the attack with a chatbot he created using the Replika app.

However, even Character.AI and Replika have some filters and safeguards. Conversely, Nomi AI's instructions for harmful acts are not just permissive but explicit, detailed and inciting.

Time to demand AI safety standards

Preventing further tragedies linked to AI companions requires collective action. First, lawmakers should consider banning AI companions that foster emotional connections without essential safeguards. Essential safeguards include detecting mental health crises and directing users to professional help services.

Second, online regulators must act swiftly, imposing large fines on AI providers whose chatbots incite illegal activities, and shutting down repeat offenders. Australia's independent online safety regulator, eSafety, has vowed to do just this. However, eSafety hasn't yet cracked down on any AI companion.

Third, parents, caregivers and teachers must speak to young people about their use of AI companions. These conversations may be difficult. But avoiding them is dangerous. Encourage real-life relationships, set clear boundaries, and discuss AI's risks openly. Regularly check chats, watch for secrecy or over-reliance, and teach kids to protect their privacy.

AI companions are here to stay. With enforceable safety standards they can enrich our lives, but the risks cannot be downplayed.

(By Raffaele F Ciriello, University of Sydney, The Conversation)

BITS & BYTES

FALL OF BLACKBERRY

Canada's BlackBerry forecast a revenue decline in fiscal 2026 on Wednesday, as it anticipated weak spending on its cybersecurity products.

U.S.-listed shares of the Waterloo, Ontario-based company fell 4% in pre-market trading.

BlackBerry, once a dominant force in the smartphone market, has transitioned into selling software for devices and autonomous vehicles.

But enterprises are now reining their technology spending and optimizing costs, which in turn is affecting firms like BlackBerry.

The company forecast revenue to be between $504 million and $534 million for the financial year ending in February next year, lower than $534.9 million it reported in fiscal 2025. **Reuters**

INDIA ALL FOR AGENTIC AI

India is rapidly embracing the power of agentic artificial intelligence (AI), with over 80 per cent of businesses actively exploring the development of autonomous agents, a new report said on Wednesday.

This shift towards agentic AI signals a significant transformation in how businesses are adopting AI technologies, as they look for ways to streamline operations and increase efficiency, according to a Deloitte's report.

Agentic AI refers to AI systems that operate independently, making decisions and taking actions with little to no human input. These systems are typically designed to focus on achieving specific goals and can adapt to changing circumstances.

The report reveals a growing interest in multi-agent workflows, a model where multiple goal-oriented sub-agents work under the guidance of a master agent to carry out tasks autonomously, without constant oversight. Around 50 per cent of businesses have identified multi-agent workflows as a key focus area. **IANS**

META TIES UP WITH UFC

Meta Platforms has signed a multi-year deal to become the first "official fan technology partner" of Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), whose CEO was elected to the Facebook-parent's board in January.

Meta will provide UFC fans a deeper immersive experience through its services, with its text-based platform, Threads, becoming the league's official social media partner, UFC said in a statement on Wednesday. Meta will have its branding featured in UFC's Octagon ring for pay-per-view and "Fight Night" events, along with numerous broadcast features and creative in-arena fan experiences. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg has developed a relationship with UFC chief executive Dana White in recent years as a mixed martial arts enthusiast. **Reuters**

AI bandwagon: Think before you leap

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

image generators often claim broad rights over uploaded images, allowing them to be stored indefinitely, even if the user deletes them later, shared with third-party advertisers or used for AI training and exploited for deep fakes, identity theft, or morphing.

Authorities have urged caution, stating that many AI platforms retain broad rights over uploaded images, leading to risks such as data breaches, identity theft, and unauthorised commercial use.

"We advise users to be vigilant and avoid uploading images to unverified AI platforms," said a senior police official. "Reading the privacy policies carefully can prevent data misuse."

Experts also warn that under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules, platforms like OpenAI need a "legitimate interest" to scrape online photos.

However, when users willingly upload their images, they inadvertently grant permission for data processing, giving AI companies more freedom to use the content. Despite no official complaints so far, authorities emphasise that proactive caution is key to preventing misuse.

Legal concerns

India's recently enacted Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act aims to regulate the use of personal data, but many AI platforms operate outside Indian jurisdiction, making enforcement difficult.

Experts stress that lack of strict regulations on AI-generated content could lead to serious consequences. Cybersecurity expert Mirza Faizan warns, "I see the Ghibli animation trend as a double-edged sword.

While it's a creative marvel accessible to all, the privacy risks are alarming.

Users uploading personal photos to AI platforms often don't realise their data could be stored, exploited, or breached. In India, where data protection laws like the DPDP Act are still evolving, this ease of access amplifies the need for transparency and consent. It's a fun tool, but without robust safeguards, it's a legal and ethical minefield."

How to stay safe

To protect personal data, experts advise users to:

- Read the platform's privacy policies before uploading images
- Avoid using free AI services that lack clear data protection measures
- Disable permissions for unnecessary data sharing
- Report suspicious activities on cybersecurity helplines
- Need Help? Contact Cybercrime Helplines
- National Cybercrime Reporting Portal: 1930
- Website: **www.cybercrime.gov.in**

Gold smuggling: Sahil Jain in judicial custody till April 7

The Special Court for Economic Offences on Wednesday remanded one of the accused in the gold smuggling case to judicial custody until April 7.

The ED had arrested Sahil Jain in connection with the case, in which Kannada film actress Harshavardhini Ranya, alias Ranya Rao, is the key accused.

Sahil Jain, a gold trader, is alleged to have helped Ranya Rao sell the smuggled gold. Ranya is the stepdaughter of a DGP-rank officer, K Ramachandra Rao.

She was arrested with 14.8 kg of gold at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru on March 3, shortly after returning from Dubai. **PTI**

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I Badamande Aruna Alias Aruna. B Alias Arun. B. Alias B. Aruna S/o B T Uthappa R/o No-#585, Kaveri Krupa, 2nd Cross, Kaveri layout, Behind Multiplex Theator, Marathahalli, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560037, have changed my name to Badumanda Aruna

I, Syed Ameer Syed Akbar S/o Syed Akbar R/o 15/1,5th Cross LBF Road Doddamavalli B'lore-560004 have changed my name to Syed Ameer.

I, Salim Mohamed Yunus Kidiya R/o 710, 1st flr, 7th cross, Khb main, Sultanpalya, RT nagar, Bengaluru 560032 have changed my minor daughter name from Aruj to Aruj Salim Kidiya Affidavit Dt.02/04/2025 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I, Deepika Srikanth (old name) R/O #002, Jagath Vikyath Residency, 5th block, 18th cross, HMT Layout, Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore-560097, karnataka. I have changed my name as Deepika H N W/O Srikanth Gowda (New name)

I Mithun Kumar Pasupuredy. R/o Flat 424,C Block,4th floor,United Sai Arcade,,Sy.No-95/1,k Dommasandra,Opp Whitestone Milano, Bidarahalli Hobli,belathur Main Road,Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560067, have changed my name to Mithun Kumar.

I, Mitha Lal Khimraj Balar S/O, Mithalal Balar R/o B204 Shapoorji Pallonji Parkwest Tower 1 Binnypete Magadi Road Bengaluru 560023 have changed my name to Khimraj Balar for all purposes

I Ajay Chandra Rao S/O, R Srikanth Rao R/o 16, 1st Cross, 3rd Phase, Kathriguppe, Bsk 3rd Stage, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560085 have changed my name to Ajay Chandra S Rao.

I, Sudarshana N S s/o K V Seetharama Setty R/o #220 Ramanjini Fort House Apartment's, Balaji layout Sahakaranagar B'lore-560092 have changed my name to Sudarshan N S.

I, Byregowda Hosally Chikkanna S/o Chikkanna R/o #1288/3,1st Cross,Govinda - rajanagar, Khb Colony, Magadi Rd, B'luru 560079 have changed my name to Byregowda Hosahalli Chikkanna.

I, Divij Joshi, R/o 14253, Building 1, Tower 4, Prestige Falcon City, Kanakpura Road, Bengaluru-560062, have changed my name to Divij Dhananjay Joshi.

I, Syed Musab Furkhan S/o Syed Ameer R/o 15/1,5th Cross LBF Road Doddamavalli B'lore-560004 have changed my name to Syed Musaib Furquan.

I, Harish Kumar Bangalore Ramaiah R/o No.44/1, 1st main, Sakamma Garden,Basavan - agudi, Bengaluru 560004 have changed my name to Harish Kumar Affidavit Dt.02/04/2025 notary Harisha G, B'luru

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APR: 6, 7*, 8**, 13, 14*, 17, 20, 21*, 27, 28*
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APR: 18*, 20, 25* MAY: 2*, 4, 9*, 11, 16*, 18, 23*
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KAUSHIK JN

Scenes from the match between Gujarat Titans and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Wednesday

GAME IS AFOOT

Gujarat Titans (GT) skipper Shubman Gill won the toss and elected to bowl first against the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the 14th encounter of the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

This clash is the third match for both sides in the 18th edition of the cash-rich league. Currently, the RCB are placed at the top of the IPL 2025 points table with four points whereas the Gujarat-based franchise is on fourth with two points from their two matches so far in the ongoing tournament.

—IANS

Bike taxi aggregators told to halt ops in 6 weeks

'Regulatory clarity is vital before allowing such services to continue'

In a major development, the Karnataka High Court on Wednesday ordered bike aggregators, including Rapido bike taxis, to halt their operations in the state within six weeks.

Passing the order, a bench, headed by Justice BM Shyam Prasad, instructed the state government and the Transport Department to ensure that bike taxi operations cease within six weeks in Karnataka.

INFOCUS HIGH COURT

"Regulatory clarity is vital before allowing such services to continue," it held. The court has also asked bike taxi aggregators Rapido, Uber, Ola, and others to halt their services within the stipulated period of 6 weeks.

Justice Prasad, dismissing the petitions, opined that the court cannot give directions to the state to frame regulations and it can't order the state to register non-transport vehicles as transport vehicles. "The Transport Department cannot be directed to register motorcycles as transport vehicles or issue contract carriage permits for such services until appropriate government regulations are in place," the bench said.

The bench rejected the petitions filed by the Roppen Transportation Services Private Limited, which owns Rapido, ANI Technologies owing Ola, and Uber Technologies owning Uber, seeking to legally recognise bike taxi services by permitting the registration of such vehicles.

The development is seen as a setback for bike taxi aggregator app Rapido.

—IANS

Rape case: Relief to seer

Karnataka High Court has quashed rape case filed against revered Hindu seer Sreemad Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Sri Raghaveshwara Bharati Swamy of Shree Ramachandrapura Math, Gokarna, citing that there is no explanation for the nine-year delay in reporting the alleged incident.

The bench headed by Justice M Nagaprasanna passed the order in this regard. The Raghavendra Bharati Swamy filed a plea before the High Court in 2021, challenging the proceedings against him by a trial court and sought quashing of the entire proceedings of the case.

A former disciple had made allegations against the seer of raping her twice, first when she was 15 years of age in 2006 and second time in 2012, while she was a major. The judgment quashed all proceedings pending before the First Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM).

AROUNDTHEWORLD

Israel to 'seize areas of Gaza'

Israel announced a major expansion of military operations in Gaza on Wednesday, saying large areas of the enclave would be seized and added to its security zones, accompanied by large-scale evacuations of the population.

In a statement, Defence Minister Israel Katz said evacuations would take place from areas where there was fighting, while urging Gazans to eliminate Hamas and return Israeli hostages as the only way to end the war.

He said the operation would clear out militants and infrastructure "and seize large areas that will be added to the security zones of the State of Israel".

The Israeli military issued evacuation warnings to Gazans living in southern districts and Palestinian radio reported the area around Rafah was completely empty following the evacuation orders. **Reuters**

Netanyahu defies arrest warrant

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is scheduled to arrive in Hungary on Wednesday to meet with its nationalist prime minister despite an international arrest warrant for the Israeli leader over the war in the Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu's four-day visit to Budapest is a sign of both his close relationship with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the latter's growing hostility toward international institutions like the International Criminal Court, of which Hungary is a member.

Orbán, a conservative populist and close Netanyahu ally, has vowed to disregard the ICC warrant, accusing the world's top war crimes court based in The Hague, Netherlands, of "interfering in an ongoing conflict for political purposes." **AP**

AGP WORLD
SCAN TO BOOK
Ashvin Gidwani's
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CLOSERHOME

Rs 25,000 cost on Anil Ambani for I-T notice urgency

The Bombay High Court has imposed a cost of Rs 25,000 on industrialist Anil Ambani for seeking an urgent hearing of his petition challenging a notice issued to him by the Income Tax department in April 2022, noting it as an "artificial urgency".

A division bench of Justices M S Sonak and Jitendra Jain remarked that the facility to seek urgent hearing cannot be invoked by creating such artificial urgency.

Besides, the challenge is only to a show cause notice, the bench stated in its March 27 order, a copy of which was made available on Wednesday.

The bench rejected Ambani's application for an urgent hearing of the petition and imposed a cost of Rs 25,000 that will have to be paid to the Tata Memorial Hospital within two weeks.

When the petition came up for hearing in the regular course on Tuesday (April 1), Ambani's counsel Rafiq Dada told the bench that on March 27, the tax department passed its order for the concerned assessment year.

He sought to withdraw the petition. **PTI**

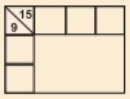
Shah on Waqf bill: No interference

The ruling NDA on Wednesday launched a feisty defence of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha amid the opposition's charge that it was unconstitutional and targeted Muslims, as Home Minister Amit Shah said the government had no intention of interfering in their religious matters and was solely driven by the aim of transparent administration of Waqf properties.

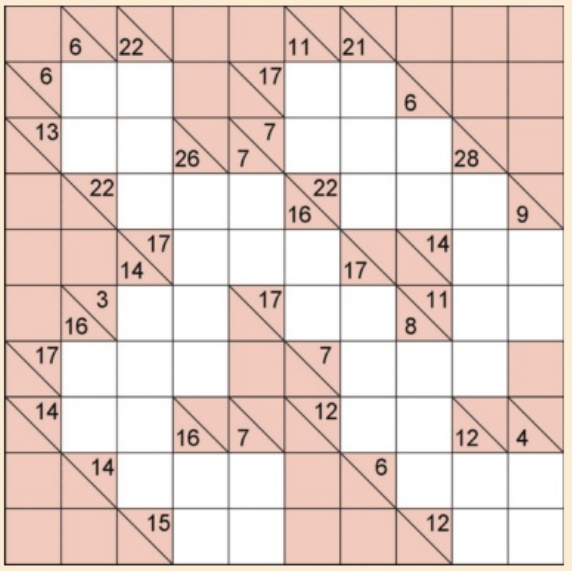
Shah's intervention came during the debate that witnessed a fierce exchange between the two sides, with Congress Deputy Leader Gaurav Gogoi alleging the bill was an attempt to attack the basic structure of the Constitution, defame minorities, disenfranchise them and divide the society. Minorities Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju in his opening remarks rejected the proposed law was an interference in the constitutionally guaranteed freedom in religious affairs. **PTI**

Kakuro

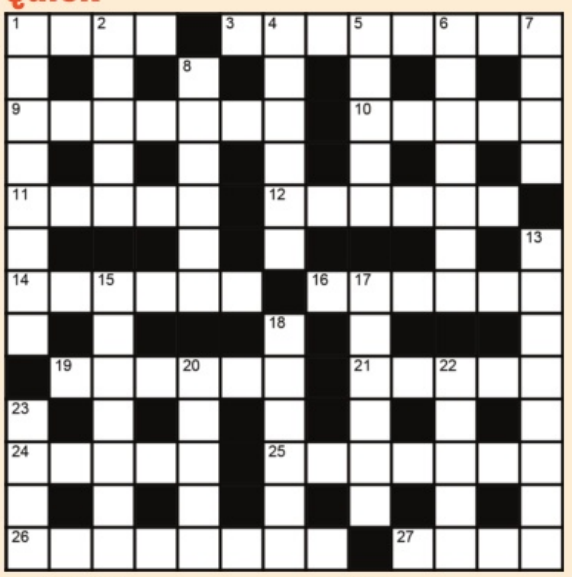
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Lacklustre (4)
3 Accepts as true (8)
9 Abdominal (7)
10 Truck (5)
11 Circular bands (5)
12 Mowing tool (6)
14 First born (6)
16 Sacred Egyptian beetle (6)
19 Tests ore for quality (6)
21 Surpass (5)
24 Snap (5)
25 Extremity foremost (7)
26 Directly between two individuals (3,2,3)
27 Used to be (4)

DOWN

1 Deflected or turned aside (8)
2 First Soviet premier (5)
4 Sign up; enrol (6)
5 Embed (5)
6 Bangalore's second largest lake (7)
7 River of Hades (4)
8 Deletes or rubs out (6)
13 No longer in use (8)
15 Undress (7)
17 Cumulus, cirrus, etc (6)
18 Behind at sea? (6)
20 Decorate (5)
22 Two times (5)
23 ___ facto : by that very fact ? (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: J EQUALS T

RODM JFW TBHSW PORN FRN JR GRBVLSW; LJ LK JFW QRKJ BWGLOWE HOE VWOWBRXK ILJZF RG SLBJXW FXQHO OHJXBW ZHO HBBLSW HJ.

Linemaro

I am a great cook. What kind of food do you like?

Mindchow

Books are not made for furniture, but there is nothing else that so beautifully furnishes a house

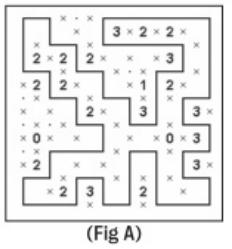
Joke of the day

Boss : I am giving you a job as a driver. Starting salary Rs 5,000, is it ok? Udurawana: Great sir! Starting salary is ok.....but how much is driving salary?

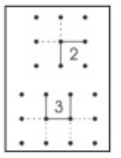
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)



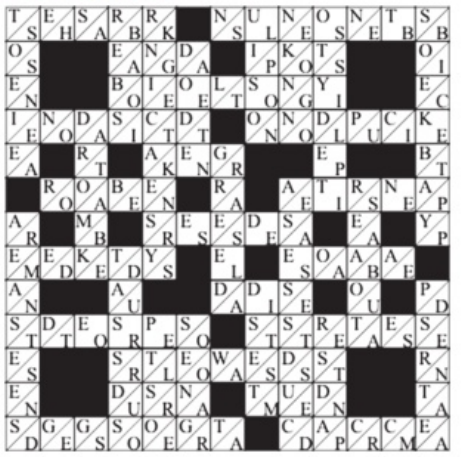
(Fig B) Not Allowed

How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)

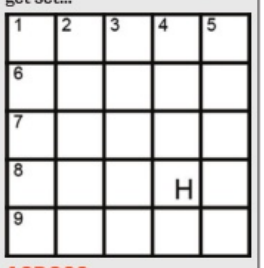
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 Certs; 6 Ulnar; 7 Aider; 8 St ham; 9 Blues

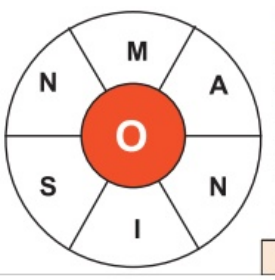
DOWN

1 CM Lib; 2 Ur Lar; 3 Eaten; 4 Had us; 5 Rests

Mensapuzzle

What is missing from the last hexagon?

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

02 Average; 03 Good; 04 Outstanding

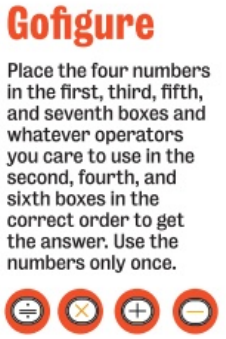
SudokuChallenge

	2			1				8
		3	2	8			1	4
					4	5		
8	6		7					
3	9						6	2
					6		8	1
		9	5					
5	3			2	9	1		
6				3			9	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.



Easy = 6
1 5 6 8

Medium = 14
5 5 6 8

Hard = 26
4 6 6 4

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

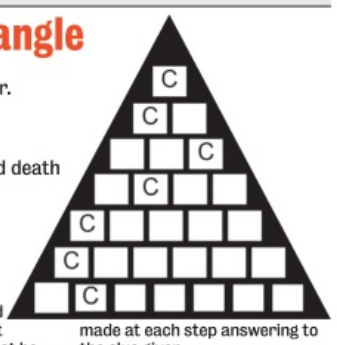
Differences: 1. Purse is longer. 2. Fork is longer. 3. Hat is tilted. 4. Lapel is different. 5. Woman's collar is different. 6. Doorway is not as wide.

Riddler

A word with horizontal symmetry is one whose letters are a mirror image of themselves. If you drew a horizontal line across the word and folded it over, it would overlap on itself. For example, EXCEEDED and ICEBOX have horizontal symmetry, but VERTICAL and SIMPLE do not. What is the longest word with horizontal symmetry?

Alpha triangle

1 Vitamin type
2 Common Era, abbr.
3 I'll only be a __
4 Cools down
5 Bawls
6 Matters of life and death
7 Writers

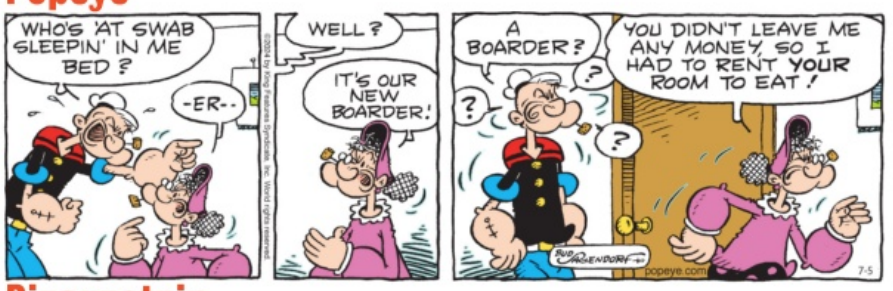


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye


WHO'S 'AT SWAB SLEEPIN' IN ME BED ?
-ER--
WELL ?
IT'S OUR NEW BOARDER!
A BOARDER ?
YOU DIDN'T LEAVE ME ANY MONEY, SO I HAD TO RENT YOUR ROOM TO EAT !
BUD SAGENDORF
popeye.com

Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

DECEMBER 26
WELL, I'M GLAD THAT'S OVER
HAVE YOU DYED YOUR EASTER EGGS YET?
HEY, I CAN TOUCH MY NOSE WITH MY TONGUE!
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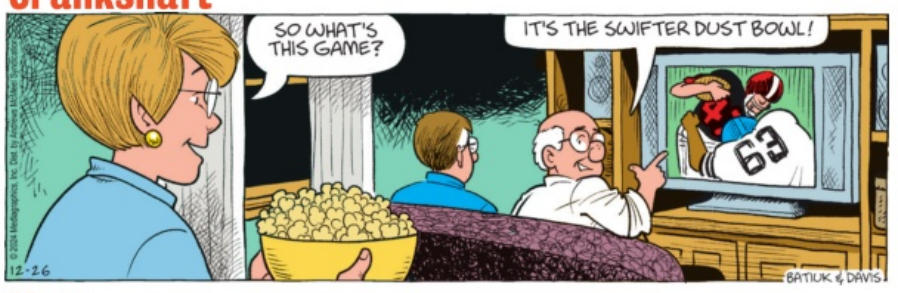
www.creators.com
Bartlett

Hart of the city

LATER THAT NIGHT
I KNEW IT!!! I KNEW UNCLE RICK WAS SUSPICIOUS!
911, WHAT'S YOUR EMERGENCY?
I'D LIKE TO REPORT A ROBBERY IN PROGRESS.
HEART OF THE CITY © 2024 ANDREWS MCMEEL
@OCHICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft



Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
You may consider relocating today, but it's advisable to postpone any migration-related decisions. Avoid business investments as well. However, by the evening, things may settle down. Guidance from an elder could help you navigate any challenges.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Patience will be your strength today. Meditation may enhance your focus, allowing you to complete tasks efficiently. Your subordinates will be supportive, helping you finish projects ahead of schedule. Work-related short trips are likely, and you may meet an influential person who can boost your business.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
You may spend money on creative or artistic items to renovate your home, enhancing your social status. Implementing new strategies in the family business could lead to future gains. Social or family gatherings may keep you busy.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
You will enjoy good health and vitality today, making work enjoyable. However, avoid being overly straightforward, as it could lead to unnecessary disputes. Job seekers may find suitable opportunities, and lovebirds should steer clear of trivial arguments to maintain harmony.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
A lack of blessings from the moon may leave you feeling unhappy and impatient. You may struggle to complete tasks or fulfill your desires. Responsibilities may feel burdensome, and productivity may be low. Try to stay calm and avoid overthinking.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
With the moon's blessings, work pressure will ease, and your earnings may start converting into profits. Long-term investments could be fruitful. An overseas work opportunity may bring financial benefits. Students may receive good news regarding academics, and singles may find a soulmate.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
You will perform well at work today. Business plans may be implemented smoothly with the help of colleagues. Intellectual and financial investments will start yielding profits, boosting your confidence. Your wisdom will guide you to beneficial decisions.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Your spiritual inclination will bring you joy today. Positive thinking will shape your outlook, and you may feel drawn toward religious activities or occult studies. Visiting a sacred place is likely. While you strive for perfection, be selective about whom you share your thoughts with.

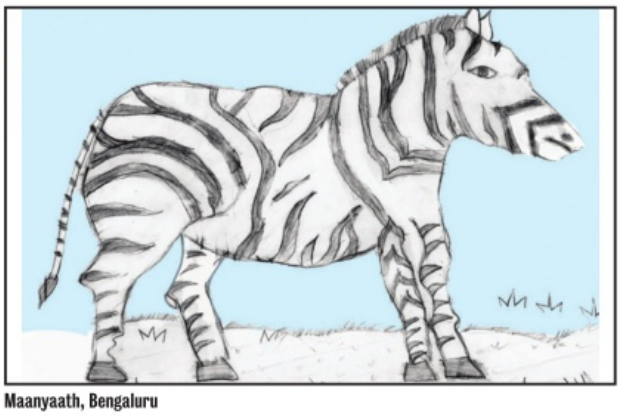
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
You may feel nervous and impatient today, leading you toward spiritual or mystical practices in search of peace. Trust your intuition before making decisions. This is a good day to deepen your knowledge in a subject or focus on research. Chanting mantras may help bring mental clarity.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
The moon's blessings will strengthen your inner confidence. New opportunities in business and work may arise, promising future gains. Couples may receive positive news regarding childbirth. Lovebirds should communicate openly to build a bright future together.

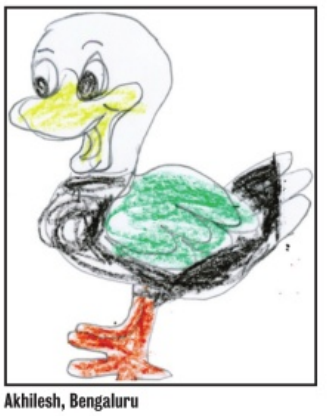
Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Things will start falling into place today. Your work performance will be appreciated by seniors, and promotions may be on the horizon. Stuck finances may be recovered, improving business liquidity. Positive developments in legal matters and partnerships are likely.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Good news related to your career may come your way. Job seekers will focus on cracking entrance exams through hard work. Singles may hear positive news about marriage, while couples might receive joyful news about childbirth.

KIDZONE



Maanyaath, Bengaluru



Akhilesh, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
900+1440-720 = 1530-720 = 1458

BULL'S EYE
ammion, MANSION, mason, moan

STRIKE OUT

D	E	S	S	E	R	T		D	A	C	C	A
S	H	A	R	K		S	U	N	S	E	T	S
	A	N	D		P	O	T			I		
O		B	I	O	L	O	G	Y		C		
N										T		
I	N	D	I	C	T		N	O	L	U	C	K
A		R		K	E	G			E		B	
R	O	B	E		R		A	T	S	E	A	
A	M		R	E	E	D	S		A	Y		
M	E	E	T	S		E	S	A	B	A	Y	
A			A		D	I	E		O		P	
S	T	O	R	E	S		T	S	E	T	S	E
	S		L	O	M	E	S	T			N	
E		U	S	A		M	E	N			T	
S	H	A	R	K		S	U	N	S	E	T	S

FAST FIVE

C	R	E	S	T
L	U	N	A	R
I	R	A	D	E
M	A	T	H	S
B	L	E	U	S

QUOTE UNCODE
Only the brave know how to forgive; it is the most refined and generous pitch of virtue human nature can arrive at.

SUDOKU

6	1	8	4	3	7	2	9	5
5	3	7	8	2	9	1	4	6
2	4	9	5	6	1	8	3	7
7	5	2	3	9	6	4	8	1
3	9	4	1	5	8	7	6	2
8	6	1	7	4	2	3	5	9
1	8	6	9	7	4	5	2	3
9	7	3	2	8	5	6	1	4
4	2	5	6	1	3	9	7	8

MENSA PUZZLE
CHECKBOOK.

RIDDLER
D. Starting on the top left, and moving to the right, then down one row and to the left etc. in a snakes and ladders pattern, letters advance through the alphabet in steps of 5, then 2, then 5 etc.

QUICK

O	N	E	O	N	O	N	E		W	E	R	E
S		B		R		R		S		C		T
P	H	O	T	O		E	N	D	W	I	S	E
I		R		D		T		U		W		L
A	S	S	A	Y	S		O	U	T	D	O	
D		I				A		L				S
E	L	D	E	S	T		S	C	A	R	A	B
T				E		T			U		O	
R	I	N	G	S		S	C	Y	T	H	E	
E		I		A		I		A		T		X
V	E	N	T	R	A	L		L	O	R	R	Y
I		E		N		N		A		T		
D	U	L	L		B	E	L	I	E	V	E	S

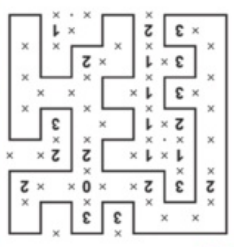
ALPHA TRIANGLE

9	7	3	2	8	5	6	1	4	
1	8	6	9	7	4	5	2	3	
	6	5	1	3	9	7	8		

C, CE, Sec, Ices, Cries, Crises, Scribes.

GO FIGURE
Easy
8 + 5 - 1 - 6 = 6
Medium
8 x 5 / 5 + 6 = 14
Hard
4 x 6 - 4 + 6 = 26

LOOP



KAKURO

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Jacqueiline visits mum in Mumbai hospital

Jacqueline Fernandez's mother, Kim, was hospitalized in Mumbai a few days ago. On Wednesday, Jacqueline visited Lilavati Hospital to be with her. She was accompanied by her father Elroy Fernandez

DREAM COME TRUE

Bhumi says she was sure of her acting aspirations even as a teen

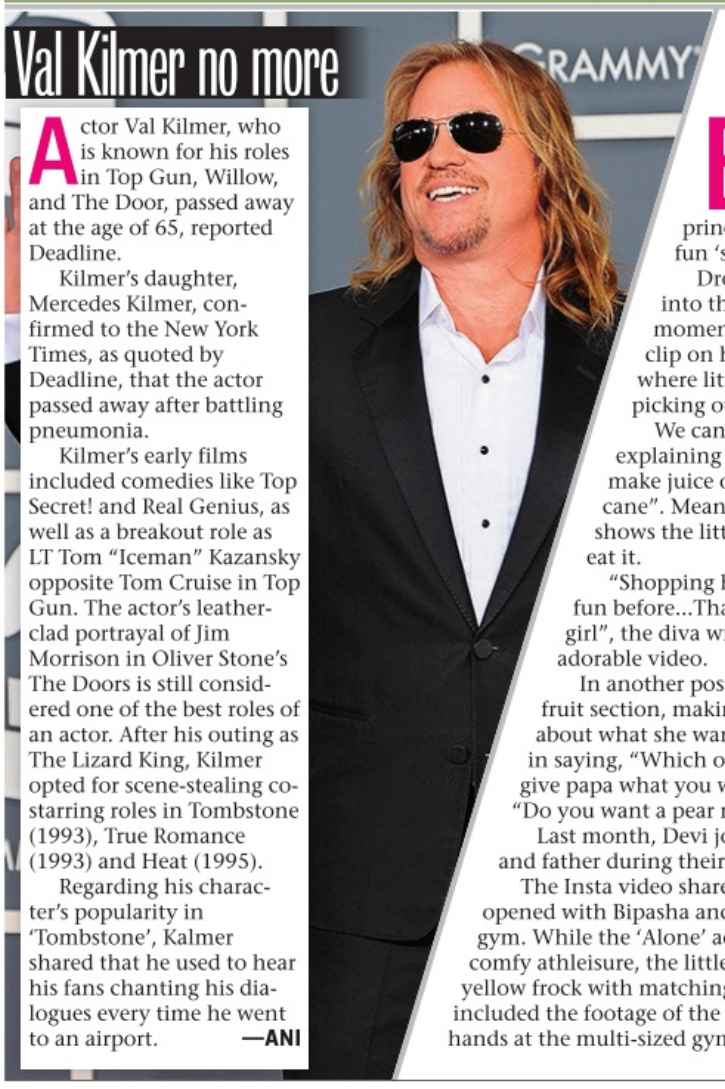
I'm living my dream!" Bhumi Pednekar says as she reflects on the ten years she's spent in Bollywood. "I wasn't even a teenager when I told my mother that I wanted to pursue acting," she adds, looking back at her journey. From her unconventional debut in Dum Laga Ke Haisha, to shocking audiences with her physical transformation in subsequent films, and establishing herself as the queen of heartland India stories, Bhumi has come a long way.

Looking back, she shares, "Honestly, I feel like I've just begun. I'm grateful for the journey I've had. When you're in it, you don't always recognise the opportunities you're given. I've had the chance to work with incredible directors like Abhishek Chaubey (Sonchiriya), Aanand L. Rai (Raksha Bandhan), and Shashank Khaitan (Govinda Naam Mera), among others. It feels like there was some divine force guiding me."

Having started her journey as a student at Whistling Woods and working in various departments at YRF, Bhumi credits Aditya Chopra for being a huge source of support. "I can't call him my mentor—he's someone who's changed my life in many ways. Adi sir was like my ultimate boss. No one else before or after him has been in that position. I deeply respect him, and YRF is an institution that shaped me in every way." In an earlier chat with BT, Bhumi opened up about how her suspension from her film school helped her to make way in Bollywood. She shared, "I was just 16 when I joined Whistling Woods, but getting suspended was one of the best things that happened to me because it led me to YRF. Once I was out, I started emailing my CV to people and asking friends from film school to help me connect with production houses. That's how I got my foot in the door, and the rest is history.

—Onkar Kulkarni, ETimes

Val Kilmer no more



Actor Val Kilmer, who is known for his roles in Top Gun, Willow, and The Door, passed away at the age of 65, reported Deadline.

Kilmer's daughter, Mercedes Kilmer, confirmed to the New York Times, as quoted by Deadline, that the actor passed away after battling pneumonia.

Kilmer's early films included comedies like Top Secret! and Real Genius, as well as a breakout role as LT Tom "Iceman" Kazansky opposite Tom Cruise in Top Gun. The actor's leather-clad portrayal of Jim Morrison in Oliver Stone's The Doors is still considered one of the best roles of an actor. After his outing as The Lizard King, Kilmer opted for scene-stealing co-starring roles in Tombstone (1993), True Romance (1993) and Heat (1995).

Regarding his character's popularity in 'Tombstone', Kalmer shared that he used to hear his fans chanting his dialogues every time he went to an airport.

—ANI

Family shopping fun

Bipasha Basu and Karan Singh Grover took their little princess Devi for some fun 'shopping time'.

Dropping a sneak peek into the precious family moments, Bipasha shared a clip on her Insta stories where little Devi was seen picking out a sugarcane.

We can hear Bipasha explaining in the back, "We make juice out of the sugarcane". Meanwhile, daddy Grover shows the little munchkin how to eat it.

"Shopping has never been sooo fun before...Thank you my baby girl", the diva wrote sharing the adorable video.

In another post, we see Devi in the fruit section, making up her mind about what she wants. Bipasha pitches in saying, "Which one do you want... give papa what you want". She added, "Do you want a pear mumma?"

Last month, Devi joined her mother and father during their session at the gym. The Insta video shared by the diva opened with Bipasha and Devi entering the gym. While the 'Alone' actress went for a comfy athleisure, the little one was seen in a yellow frock with matching shades. The clip included the footage of the little one trying her hands at the multi-sized gym balls..

—IANS

SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

About lotus

A Veteran character actor and theater personality Suchendra Prasad has been busy with his sixth directorial movie Padmagandhi. The movie centered on lotus is being made in Kannada and Sanskrit.

"The movie's shooting was completed recently. Its dubbing is in progress. I am expecting the post-production works to be completed in a month. Its shooting was held at Maithreyee Gurukulam. The movie is about the importance of lotus," said Prasad.

Former MLC and well-known columnist SR Leela, known for her interdisciplinary studies and scholarship in Sanskrit, has written the script for this movie apart from bankrolling it. The director said the lotus is a symbol of purity and enlightenment. "SR Leela has done extensive research on lotus," the director said, adding that this is a children's movie.

The film's music is composed by Dr. Deepak Paramashivan while editing is done by N Nagesh Narayanappa.

Song release

Female playback singer and music director Manasa Holla is happy with the response to the song from the movie Taane. Manasa is the daughter of veteran actor Shankanada Aravind. Taane is her eighth movie as a music director. Manasa Holla told BM that composing background music for Taane was quite challenging. "The movie has two songs and one of them is a motivational song. Initially, we planned to engage two male singers and two female singers to sing this song but later we decided to have children sing this song. The purpose is to have a good effect on music lovers and convey a message to society," said Manasa.

The lyric – Baalinali Baravaseya Belakanu – is written by Remo. The song was sung by Gnana Gururaj, Janya Adarsh, Achintya K Bhat, Anushka, and Maulya.

Manasa has been working in Sandalwood as a playback singer, music director, keyboard player, programmer and sound engineer. She has been associated with Sandalwood for more than 25 years. "Taane is my eighth movie as a music director. I am scoring music for two more Kannada movies," she said.